DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 378 409 CE 068 091

TITLE	The State Adult Literacy Survey: A Look at Results for Ohio. Adult Literacy Fact Sheet.
INSTITUTION	Kent State Univ., OH. Ohio Literacy Resource Center.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Jan 95
NOTE	3p.; Condensed by Jean Stephens from ED 371 178.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Adults; Age Differences; Educational Attainment; *Education Work Relationship; Employment Level; Employment Patterns; Individual Characteristics; *Literacy Education; Racial Differences; *Reading Achievement; *Reading Habits; State Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	*Ohio; *Ohio Adult Literacy Survey

ABSTRACT

The Ohio State Literacy Survey, which assessed Ohio adults' literacy skills according to their performance on tasks reflecting the materials/demands encountered in daily life, was administered to a sample of 1,568 persons aged 16 years or older who were randomly selected from Ohio's approximately 8.3 million adults. Each participant received proficiency scores (0-500) on scales assessing prose, document, and quantitative literacy. The literacy levels of those surveyed (for all three scales) were as follows: Level 1 (0-225), 16%-18%; Level 2 (226-275), 27%-31%; Level 3 (276-325), 32%-34%; Level 4 (326-375), 17%-19%; and Level 5 (376-500), 2%-4%. Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to demonstrate poor literacy skills. The average scores of 19- to 24-year-olds were comparable to those of adults aged 35-44 years. African-American adults were more likely than white adults to perform in the two lowest levels and less likely to attain the two highest levels. Literacy scores were correlated with years of education, employment, economic status, and level of civic responsibility (as indicated by being a registered voter). The average prose, document, and quantitative proficiencies of Ohio respondents were nearly identical to those of adults living in the Midwest and higher than those of adults nationwide. (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

039-0700-0003
JANUARY 1995

Ohio Literacy Resource Center

Enhancing adult literacy in the State of Ohio

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Adult Literacy Fact Sheet

ED 378 409

THE STATE ADULT LITERACY SURVEY: A LOOK AT RESULTS FOR OHIO

The State Adult Literacy Survey (SALS) examined the literacy skills of adults in 12 states. Conducted in 1992, this research project was a component of the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), a large-scale assessment funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the Educational Testing Service.

The Ohio survey: The Ohio Adult Literacy Survey (OALS) was designed to assess Ohio adults' literacy skills according to their performance on tasks that reflected the types of materials and demands adults encounter in their daily lives. A total of 1,568 adults, 16 years of age and older, were randomly chosen and surveyed. They represent approximately 8.3 million adults statewide. Each participant was asked to spend approximately an hour responding to a series of literacy tasks as well as to questions about his or her demographic characteristics, educational background, employment, income, reading practices, etc.

How results were reported: Adults received proficiency scores (0-500) for three categories, or scales, each representing a distinct aspect of literacy: *prose, document, and quantitative*. For each of those scales, five levels of proficiency were defined: Level 1 (0-225), Level 2 (226-275), Level 3 (276-325), Level 4 (326-375), and Level 5 (376-500). Level 1 represents the *lowest* and Level 5 the *highest* level.

Literacy levels of adult Ohioans (for all three scales): Level 1: 16%-18%; Level 2: 27%-31%; Level 3: 32%-34%; Level 4: 17%-19%; Level 5: 2%-4%.

Composition of Level 1

- Of those scoring on Level 1 on the quantitative scale, only 36% had completed high school or GED -- as compared with 74% of adults statewide.
- Of those scoring on Level 1 for all three scales: 40% were age 65 or older as compared to 17% of the state population, and 26% to 28% had physical or mental conditions that prevent full participation in school, work, or other activities, compared to 11% of the state population.

Profiles of Adult Literacy in Ohio

- Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to demonstrate poor literacy skills:
  -- 50-63% of respondents age 55-64 ranked in the two lowest levels.
  -- 73-84% of respondents age 65 and up ranked in the two lowest levels.
- The average scores of 19- to 24-year-olds were comparable to those of adults age 35-44.
- African-American adults were more likely than white adults to perform in the two lowest levels and less likely to attain the two highest levels. 27-37% of African-American adults ranked in Level 1, compared to 14-16% of white adults. Average years of schooling for African-American adults was 12.3 years; for white adults it was 12.6 years.

CE 068 091

- Only 2% of adults in Ohio were born outside the U.S. as compared to 10% nationwide, thus making it impossible to examine their literacy proficiencies.

Correlations between education and literacy scores

EDUCATION	AVERAGE PROSE SCORE
0-8 years	210
9-12 years	235
high-school diploma	276
some postsecondary education	302
two-year postsecondary education	320
four-year postsecondary education	317

- The average scores of school dropouts in Ohio who had studied for a GED or high-school-equivalency diploma were 41-43 points higher on each literacy scale than the scores of dropouts who had not participated in such a program.
- 41% of the Ohio respondents who had studied for the GED indicated they had received it.

Employment, Economic Status, and Civic Responsibility

- Of employed respondents, 31-38% performed in Levels 1 and 2, while 59-64% of unemployed respondents performed in the same levels.
- Voters had significantly higher scores than nonvoters.
- Of adults designated as poor or near poor, 62-70% performed in Levels 1 and 2.
- Median weekly earnings by literacy level:

Level 1	$197 - $205
Level 3	$314 - $332
Level 5	$560 - $594

Literacy practices

- About 17% of the respondents said they had read no books in English in the past six months. Their scores were considerably lower, on average, than those who had read at least one book.
- 30% of those surveyed said that they never used a library. Frequent users performed better than non-users.
- Respondents who got some or a lot of information from print media earned higher average scores than those who did not (278 to 283 as compared with 260 to 261).
- The average proficiencies of individuals who only watch 2 hours of TV a day were 58-61 points higher than those of respondents who watch 6 hours or more a day.

Additional Findings

- The average prose, document, and quantitative proficiencies of Ohio respondents were almost identical to those of adults living in the Midwest region and higher than those of adults nationwide.
- Most adults who demonstrated limited skills described themselves as able to read and write English well.

Condensed by: Jean Stephens

Adult Literacy in Ohio: Results of the State Adult Literacy Survey by Lynn Jenkins and Irwin Kirsch, Educational Testing Service, 1994. Available from OLRC.

THE OHIO LITERACY RESOURCE CENTER IS LOCATED AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
414 WHITE HALL, PO BOX 5190, KENT, OH 44242-0001
1-800-765-2897 OR 216-672-2007 EMAIL ADDRESS: OLRC@KENTVM.KENT.EDU